

NOT VOTING—4

Boxer
Coburn

Durbin
Heller

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table. The President shall be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session. The Senator from Vermont.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

THE HIGHWAY BILL

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, after the vote today, I think that any effort to pass a bill such as the ones we just voted on would be very difficult. But something good does happen from that; that is, we had the vast majority of people in the Chamber recognizing that we need to do something that would be stimulative to the economy—something unlike the stimulus bill we had before, where only 3 percent of the money actually went to building roads, highways, maintenance, and that type of thing.

I do appreciate the fact that we are now in a position where I think, with this behind us, we can be looking at a good, legitimate highway transportation reauthorization bill. I have been working very closely with Senators BOXER, VITTER, and BAUCUS—we are considered the “big four” in the Environment and Public Works Committee—to come up with something. I have to say that we have worked very hard, and I am talking about hours and hours. Anytime you can get Senator BARBARA BOXER from California and me to agree on something, you know we have gone through a lot of work—and we have. We have gone through a lot of give and take.

Senator BOXER and I, along with Senators VITTER and BAUCUS, recognize that we desperately need to have a transportation reauthorization bill, and we need to do it the right way. All these things we have been doing with extensions don't work. There is not a Member of this Chamber who doesn't go back every week and talk to his transportation director and say why can't we quit these extensions and get a good bill.

We have a good bill, and we are talking about reforms. It is our intention

next week, I believe, to mark up this bill. We are looking forward to that. I have a very strong bias toward transportation. For the years I was in the House, I was on that committee. We didn't have these problems then. We had a highway trust fund that always had a surplus because we were very aggressive at that time and, of course, a lot more people were purchasing gas at that time and revenues were up. So we had a surplus.

Unfortunately, this always happens in Washington, DC. Members came along and looked at the surplus, and that was a target. Everybody wanted in on it, so they put their deals into the highway trust fund. That is partly why we got to where we are today.

I appreciate the conversation we have gotten from the President. He talks about how he wants infrastructure, and he has a picture of where he was standing in front of a bridge making a speech about creating jobs. But he doesn't have anything in his program that does anything with infrastructure. Our problem is that President Obama has been talking the talk, and he has spoken more about infrastructure than any other President since Eisenhower proposed the Interstate Highway System. But when you get up to the \$800 billion stimulus bill, in doing the calculations, only 3 percent—about \$27 billion of that—was in highway construction or maintenance. Senator BOXER and I made an effort on the floor—a bipartisan effort—to try to raise the percentage. I wanted it up to 10 percent or higher, but we were unable to do it. The President was not on our side on that.

I think the good news is that today's votes, of both Democrats and Republicans, showed that they are very interested and supportive of a highway bill. We have gotten a lot of that out of the way and we can concentrate on a highway bill. I think both parties are trying to create jobs and economic growth through the building of highways and bridges.

Most Americans are unaware of how damaging regulations are. When I stop and think about proposing a massive program, which is what we are talking about now—reauthorization program—it is massive in that the funding level would probably stay the same as it has been since the highway authorization bill of 2005. But when they talk about that, we are always faced with the regulation problems. We are trying to address in this bill the regulation problems that are out there to try to have some shortcuts, to try to get some things done that otherwise would take a lot longer. Regulations have been a huge problem.

EPA REGULATIONS

This administration's Environmental Protection Agency alone has an unprecedented number of regulations, and they are destroying jobs. The results are there. I will mention the five most expensive regulations of all the regulations that have come out.

First is the greenhouse gas regulation. I think we all know what that is. That is them trying to do something through regulations they were unable to do through legislation.

Second, ozone, the national ambient air quality standards. That would be about a \$678 billion loss in GDP by 2020.

Incidentally, I failed to mention the greenhouse gas regulations, which would be in excess of \$300 billion to \$400 billion a year.

The boiler MACT regulations—that would be a \$1 billion loss to GDP. Utility MACT—MACT is maximum achievable technology. In other words, one of the problems with all these MACT bills coming out of the administration is that there is no technology available to carry out the mandates on emissions. Cement MACT is another, with \$3.5 billion in compliance costs.

Fortunately, in September, President Obama withdrew the EPA's proposed toughened ozone standards. There is good reason for that, and one is that ozone standards are supposed to be predicated upon new science. This was on the same science that the last ozone changes were based on. I think when people caught on to that and recognized what it would cost—in Oklahoma, we would be looking at some 15 counties that would be out of attainment, and there is nothing more dreadful that could happen to a State than have your counties go out of attainment so that you are not able to recruit jobs, or even keep the jobs you have. We would be talking about around 7 million jobs throughout the United States. Because of that, politically, he postponed that. Frankly, I think he is postponing it until after the next election. If he should be re-elected, I can assure you we will see that again.

Democrats always say we need to have tax increases and that is the best way to grow. I look at this sometimes. Recently, the Office of Management and Budget came up with a calculation that is consistent with one I have been using for 20 years: For each 1-percent increase in economic activity in this country, or 1-percent growth, that equates to about \$50 billion of new revenue. Interestingly enough, this is all a Republican idea. President Kennedy, who was a Democrat, said we have to raise more money for the Great Society, and the best way to raise money is to reduce marginal tax rates. He did it and it worked. We saw what President Ronald Reagan did in the years that followed that. During the 8 years he was in office, the proceeds for marginal rates went from \$204 billion to \$466 billion. That was at a time when rates were reduced more than any other 8-year period in history. We are looking at other opportunities to reduce regulations and all that so we can resolve the problem.

There is one thing that is very important—and I know there is nobody in this Chamber who doesn't recognize the concern I have expressed over the